

The Publications and Taxa of the Reverend Joseph Rowell (1820-1918)

by

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Abstract. Joseph Rowell (1820-1918) was a clergyman who collected mollusks in Panama and California. He described five species, and type material has been located for each of them.

Joseph Rowell, seventh in descent from a Thomas Rowell who emigrated to America from England in 1638, was born in Cornish, New Hampshire, 22 April 1820. At the age of 21, he left this village to attend Kimball Union Academy at Meriden, New Hampshire, earning his own way. Upon completion of his courses, he built a boat, shot the rapids on the Connecticut River, and made his way to Yale College in New Haven, where he graduated in 1848. Deciding on a career in the ministry, he attended the Union Theological Seminary in New York, completing his work there in 1851 (FERRIER, 1918; WEBSTER, 1918; KURTZ, 1939).

He soon accepted a call to become chaplain to Panama under the joint auspices of the American Seamen's Friend Society and the American and Foreign Christian Union. "Panama," he told them, "is a pestilential hole, and it will be hard to find a good man to go there. I am tough, and I can stand the climate if anyone can. I will go." So, armed with a letter of introduction to the U.S. consul in Panama from Secretary of State Daniel Webster, he went.

He remained in Panama from 1851 to 1858. There, in 1852, he married Hannah Cummings, the daughter of a New England minister. In 1852, he had his first son, Joseph Cummings Rowell, who later became the librarian of the University of California at Berkeley.

It was in Panama that he began making a shell collection. On 22 December 1855, James G. Cooper, on his way back to the East Coast from the Pacific Railroad Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Northwest, first met Rowell (COAN, 1982:59). He wrote in his diary:

"Visited Mr. Rowell, American missionary, who has a good collection of about 100 species made during four years past. He says *bulimi* can be got only at Taboga,

and several other kinds about those and the Pearl Islands only. He has a dredge, which I can get."¹

In July 1858, the Rowell family moved to San Francisco. Within a few weeks, he began to preach to sailors at the Seamen's Bethel Church. In 1867, he built what became the world famous Mariner's Church on the corner of Sacramento and Drumm streets. According to a biographer, "Sailors in all the four corners of the world knew this Mariner's Church and told grateful and admiring tales of its wise and generous and tireless chaplain. Its altar, fashioned like the bow of a sailing ship, was described on all the seven seas" (KURTZ, 1939:6).

Rowell continued mollusk collecting in California, and he regularly sent material to the Smithsonian Institution (CARPENTER, 1864:631, 1865:278-282). Some species were acquired among oysters imported to San Francisco from Acapulco, Mexico. HAINES (1886:40) described him as "one of the best informed conchologists upon this coast, and whose collection of shells, comprising many species, has but two or three rivals among private collections in America." Keep described Rowell thus: "A clergyman of San Francisco, who has described several new species, and who has collected a very fine cabinet of shells" (KEEP, 1887:220).

The only other glimpse we have of Rowell by other malacologists came late in his life, when Stillman Berry visited him on 15 April 1914. There are two accounts of this visit, a manuscript prepared in the 1940s, which was later greatly shortened when published (BERRY, 1948)²,

¹ Journal for 1855-1856. Smithsonian Inst. Archives, Rec. Unit 7067, Cooper Papers, 1853-1870.

² The draft MS is in the SBMNH.



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and the oral history materials that Donald R. Shasky and I prepared on Stillman Berry in 1980³:

“Well, it happened in the spring . . . 1914. . . . I discovered that Joseph Rowell was living in San Francisco, still alive. . . . So, I took my last opportunity one afternoon to go out Market Street to as near where he lived as possible, then I walked to his house. He wasn’t far from the old Mission. . . . And he was *very* cordial. . . . He was an old man, but his mind was good, and if I had had more time, I would have learned a great deal more than I did. He was a close personal friend of Thomas Bridges, the nephew . . . of Hugh Cuming [and] who spent his last years in Oakland. . . . He still had quite a bit of his collection. He gave me sets of [two] Californian things he had described—*Vertigo californica* . . . and *Gundlachia californica*—and a book he thought I would like . . . , the second edition to the *Conchologists First Book* by Edgar Allan Poe, a very rare item⁴. . . . Its first owner, whose autograph is on the flyleaf, was the earliest malacologist in my native state of Maine, J. W. Chickering of Portland, and he gave the book to Rowell.”

Sometime after Rowell’s death on 5 June 1918, his collection went to the University of California at Berkeley.

³ The original tapes of these interviews are in the American Malacological Union Archives at the ANSP. Transcripts of these tapes are available in several institutions, including the ANSP, SBMNH, and USNM. The quotation is rearranged for clarity.

⁴ Concerning this book, see KEEN (1936).

There, however, I have been able to locate type material of only two of his five taxa. Fortunately, between the specimens he gave to Stillman Berry, now housed at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and Rowell lots that reached other institutions, there is available type material of each of his new taxa, which are listed below.

Each entry in the following list consists of: (1) the name as originally proposed, with date, and page and figure numbers (keyed to the Literature Cited); (2) the type locality, including refinements based on other information; (3) the number of specimens, if indicated in the original publication; (4) type material, including museum numbers, type status, and number of specimens (in parentheses); and (5) remarks, including current taxonomic assignment. References are provided in the Literature Cited for all taxa mentioned, except for senior synonyms of Rowell’s taxa. It also includes references to two other Rowell works on mollusks not containing new taxa. The following abbreviations are used: ANSP, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia; CAS, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; SBMNH, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; UCMP, University of California at Berkeley, Museum of Paleontology; UMMZ, University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology.

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LIST OF TAXA

angelicum, *Pisidium*—ROWELL, 1867:353. Angel Island, San Francisco Co., California; several specimens.

Type material—UCMP 10617, syntypes (36 pairs, 3 valves) (Loc. 7195); Carnegie Museum 3840, syntype (1).

Remarks—BURCH (1975:57) listed this as a *nomen nudum*, crediting the name to HERRINGTON (1954:101). However, is it clearly made available by Rowell. Herrington said that the Carnegie Museum specimen is actually a crustacean. However, the lot at UCMP contains pisidiid clams (Lindberg, *in litt.*, 16 June 1988).

californica, *Gundlachia*—ROWELL, 1863:21–22; fig. 5. Feather River at Marysville, Yuba Co., California; Rowell; more than 50 specimens, on water plants in clear stagnant pools.

Type material—SBMNH 35010, lectotype (BERRY, 1948:16) (formerly SSB 4501; not deposited in CAS as CAS 8044, as stated by Berry); SBMNH 35011, paralectotypes (2); UMMZ 102011, "holotype" (BEQUAERT & MILLER, 1973:211).

Remarks—*Laevapex (Ferrissia) californica* (Rowell), according to BEQUAERT & MILLER (1973:211); synonym of *Ferrissia fragilis* (Tryon, 1863), according to BASCH (1963:435–440) and BURCH & TOTTENHAM (1980:215; fig. 764), but Rowell's paper was published in May, Tryon's paper was published in July, and a third synonym introduced the same year, *Gundlachia meekiana* STIMPSON (1863:250–251; figs. 2, 3), was published in December. *Ferrissia californica* (Rowell), according to TAYLOR (1981:161).

californica, Pupa—ROWELL, 1861:287. San Francisco, San Francisco Co., California; a considerable number; Rowell.

Type material—SBMNH 35008, lectotype (BERRY, 1948:16) (formerly SSB 3337; not deposited in CAS as CAS 8043, as stated by Berry); SBMNH 35009, paralectotypes (6) (none deposited in SBMNH, as stated by Berry); ANSP 59392, paralectotypes (16), including the two figured by PILSBRY (1948:996–997; figs. 533-1, 2).

Remarks—*Vertigo californica* (Rowell), according to PILSBRY (1948).

rubicunda, Epiphragmophora exarata var.—ROWELL, 1902: 52. Occidental (2 specimens) and Freestone (quite a number), Sonoma Co., California; Rowell.

Type material—ANSP 83367, lectotype (BAKER, 1962: 18) from Freestone; ANSP 371035, paralectotype (1) from Freestone; ANSP 83366, paralectotype (1) from Occidental.

Remarks—Synonym of *Helminthoglypta arrosa holderiana* (Cooper, 1875), according to PILSBRY (1939:110–111; fig. 52b).

soquela, Helix (Epiphragmophora) sequoicola—ROWELL, 1905:41–42. Midway between Soquel Creek and "Skyland," Santa Cruz Co., California; Rowell.

Type material—ANSP 89785, syntype (1); UCMF 38215, syntype (1) (Loc. 1008); CAS 036248, syntype (1).

Remarks—Synonym of *Helminthoglypta sequoicola* (Cooper, 1866), according to PILSBRY (1939:140–141; fig. 70b).

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